

**TIPPECANOE COUNTY COUNCIL
WORKING SESSION
SEPTEMBER 5, 2002**

The Tippecanoe County Council held its Working Session on Thursday, September 5, 2002 at 2:00 P.M. in the Tippecanoe Room in the County Office Building. Council members present were: President David S. Byers, Vice President Connie Basham, Jeffrey Kessler, Margaret K. Bell, Kathy Vernon, and Ronald L. Fruitt; Auditor Robert A. Plantenga, Attorney David W. Luhman, and Secretary Pauline E. Rohr. (Councilmember Jeffrey A. Kemper was absent.)

President Byers called the meeting to order.

2003 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Superior Court Judge Don Johnson appeared as representative of the judges to ask the Council to restore the three (3) Court Reporter positions, Part-time, and Overtime that were cut for 2003. He said Superior Courts IV, V, and VI cannot operate without these people due to the high volume of cases.

As one of the Council's representatives to the courts, President Byers said he has the feeling that Part-time and Overtime are overused in all courts.

Judge Johnson responded that his court has one full time Court Reporter and one full time Bailiff. If the Court Reporter can't get the orders typed, then she gets Overtime. He said they frequently have two trials going at the same time and, if a judge from out-of-town comes in, they have to furnish a Court Reporter. For the past twelve years he has used a Part-time person to serve as a back-up Court Reporter which he said saves money. Clerks who work in his office on records are employees of the Clerk and are not under his supervision.

Magistrate Wayne Fountain explained that the Court Reporter may be in court all day because the lower courts, Superior IV, V, and VI, may hear as many as 300 cases in a day. If that is the case, the Court Reporter needs to be at her computer typing Orders the next day and the Deputy Reporter will be in court. He said those courts are pressed to keep ahead with the current staff.

President Byers asked if all judges try to collect court costs. Judge Johnson said most of the people who come through his court are poor and, if they are sentenced to sixty (60) years in prison, he doesn't know how they can pay.

Superior Court V Judge Laura Zeman supplied numbers showing that Diversion Fees totaling approximately \$200,000 were collected by Superior Courts IV, V, and VI in 2001. She said the Court Reporter has to type the Orders to collect those fees. During the first quarter of this year, Superior Court V collected \$24,000 of Public Defender Fees. Other fees collected during the first quarter were \$300 by Superior Court IV, \$6,800 by Superior Court V, and \$600 by Superior Court VI. She said she is able to collect fees from the people who come through her court because they are sentenced for only short periods of time.

Judge Zeman explained that court staff is responsible for the content of files while the Clerk's staff is responsible for the physical safety of those files.

NEW BOOKMOBILE TOUR

Tippecanoe County Library staff were present to conduct a tour of their recently purchased Bookmobile.

REINSTATEMENT OF CUT POSITIONS & OTHER LINE ITEMS

According to latest figures from the Auditor, the Council over cut the 2003 Budget \$108,000. Reinstating the three (3) Court Reporter positions will cost \$102,000.

Councilmember Kessler asked how much the Auditor estimates will be uncommitted for 2003. Auditor Plantenga said that won't be known until the books are closed in January.

Probation

The Chief Probation Officer will pay for the Probation Officer position that was cut with User Fees.

Clerk

Since the Council cut a Clerk Comot 3 position and a Clerk Comot 1 position in the Clerk's General Fund Budget, the Clerk, Betty Michael, has offered to pay for two (2) Clerk positions from Clerk Record Perpetuation Funds. However, she is asking that those two positions be (2) Clerk Comot 1 positions rather than a Clerk Comot 1 and Clerk Comot 3. The Clerk said there are two Clerk Comot 1 employees who currently work on Record Perpetuation. Councilmember Kessler agreed that both should be Clerk Comot 1 positions but expressed concern that the new Clerk may not want to use the Record Perpetuation Fund for this purpose. Auditor Plantenga said the new Clerk will be able to adjust this after the first of the year if she chooses. He explained that the Council does not have to approve use of the Perpetuation Funds to fund these positions but they do have to approve the Salary Ordinance.

President Byers didn't think the Council should tie the new Clerk's hands by committing her to pay for two positions from the Record Perpetuation Fund. Councilmember Kessler said he preferred to wait until the next meeting on September 10th to decide if the Council will allow two Clerk 1 positions to be funded from Record Perpetuation.

Court Reporters

President Byers said he favors restoring the three (3) Court Reporter positions but not the Part-time and Overtime. Attorney Luhman pointed out that they can ask for additional appropriations for Part-time and Overtime next year.

- By consensus, the three (3) Court Reporter positions were restored for 2003.

Recorder

Auditor Plantenga reported that the Recorder, Pam Berglund, consulted with the State Board of Accounts who want her to pay for the employee who works on Record Perpetuation directly from that Fund. This employee's salary is approximately \$35,000. Since the Recorder agreed to pay \$40,000 as anticipated revenue to the General Fund, he said he lowered anticipated General Fund Revenue \$40,000.

Auditor Plantenga said the Recorder can only pay Part-time from the Record Perpetuation Fund if it is a contract. The Council cut the Recorder's Part-time from \$6,000 to \$1,000 in the General Fund.

Clerk Part-time

If the two Clerk positions are funded by the Clerk's Record Perpetuation Fund, the Council may reduce Part-time from \$20,000 to \$10,000.

Zoning Enforcement Office Supplies

Since this is a one person office, \$1,500 for Office Supplies seemed excessive. The Council reduced this amount to \$500.

Coroner Autopsies

Due to a new facility, more autopsies are being performed at the County Morgue. Only suspected homicides are performed out-of-county. The Council reduced this line item from \$40,000 to \$30,000.

Treasurer Office Supplies

This amount was reduced to \$1,000.

Emergency Management Volunteer Insurance Premium (in Commissioners' Budget)

Since the County is required by Statute to pay the Volunteers' Insurance, this line item amount of \$2,200 was restored to the Commissioners' Budget.

Soil & Water Conservation

Due to miscommunication, the full \$12,500 request was cut to \$0. To be consistent with the other agencies, Commissioner Benson asked the Council to reinstate that amount to half the request or \$6,250 in the Commissioners' Budget.

Reclassifications

Attorney Luhman explained that no reclassifications were approved through the Budget process but, in some circumstances, the Council included in the Budget funds that will be available if the reclassification is approved. Each request will have to follow the natural course.

→ Councilmember Kessler left the meeting.

DISCUSSION: September 10, 2002 Agenda Items

Since several requests for the September 10th meeting involve requests to transfer from the Health Insurance line item, a lengthy discussion was held concerning this policy. Some suggestions:

- Don't allow departmental transfers from Health Insurance. The Council cannot stop transfers within the 100 series (i.e. Health Insurance to Part-time).
- Move Health Insurance for General Fund departments into the Commissioners' Budget for their supervision. Won't be able to determine how many employees are using the plan and the actual cost.
- Deposit 1/24th of the Health Insurance appropriation each pay period into Health Insurance Fund 100 to build that Fund.
- Need to empower the department heads to manage this account.
- Unused Health Insurance contributes to our General Fund cash balance for the next year.
- If Health Insurance is allocated to the departments, the Council can't pull it from the departments to use for the Health Insurance Fund if the department head has another designated use for the money.

MITS Salary Ordinance

The Salary Ordinance is for the reclassification of six (6) positions for the remainder of 2002. No additional appropriation is required because funds are available. These positions have been recommended for reclassification by Wagner, Irwin, & Scheele and the County Job Classification Committee.

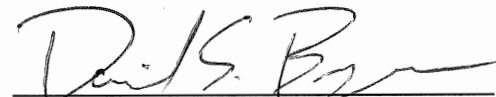
ANNOUNCEMENT


From the Krannert School of Management, Councilmembers are invited to participate in the Krannert Executive Forum Community Breakfast Series. The first will be held from 8:30 – 9:45 A.M., Friday, September 20, 2002.


ADJOURNMENT


There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

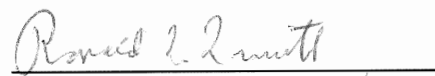
TIPPECANOE COUNTY COUNCIL

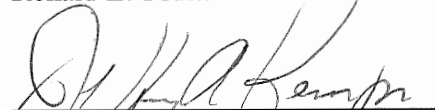

David S. Byers, President



Connie Basham, Vice President

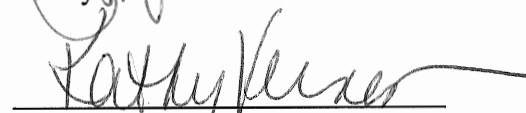

Margaret K. Bell

Attest: 
Robert A. Plantenga, Auditor


Ronald L. Fruitt


Jeffrey A. Kemper


Jeffrey Kessler


Kathy Vernon